

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 6, 11, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Windows NT as evidenced by the patent to Ozzie, the NT Workstation Resource Kit “screen shot,” the “Windows NT” study guide to Carter, and the TechNet article apparently published by Microsoft. In response to the rejections, Applicant has amended claims 1, 6, 11, and 19, without adding new matter, to better clarify the invention, and traverses the rejections.

As amended, the claimed invention relates to a method and device that permits a user to execute a password-protected secure function. The secure function might be, for example, an encryption/decryption application program that is executed whenever the user desires to send/receive secure communications. Prior to executing the secure function, the claimed invention displays a password entry screen to the user. The password entry screen is invoked responsive to receiving a command to execute the secure function. To assist the user in remembering the password, the password entry screen may include an authentication indicia recognized by the user. The secure function is executed based on the validity of the password entered by the user.

The Examiner’s §102 rejections are premised on the fact that Windows NT displays a password screen to the user at logon. In contrast to each of the amended claims, however, the NT password screen is not a password-protected secure function. Users do not need to enter a password to invoke the NT password entry screen. It simply allows users to logon, and is precedent to allowing the user to do anything with the computer. Nor is the NT password entry screen ever invoked responsive to receiving a command to execute a secure function (i.e., an application program) as recited in the amended claims. Rather, the NT password entry screen is invoked only when a user actuates the CTRL-ALT-DEL key sequence. This key sequence is assigned exclusively to invoking the NT password entry screen, and terminates all application programs not associated with the NT password screen. Because all application programs are

terminated, the key sequence can never be a command that executes the claimed secure function.

Indeed, the Ozzie patent supports this fact and is fundamentally directed at providing an alternative for applications programs that cannot make use of the application termination aspects provided by NT. *Ozzie*, col. 1, ln. 46 – col. 2, ln. 12. Specifically, Ozzie provides his own graphical “protected channel” for application programs (i.e., the password entry screen). To create the protected channel, Ozzie generates and displays a unique combination of graphical indicia with the password entry screen known by the user. The user determines the legitimacy of the password entry screen simply by visually inspecting the graphical indicia. However, the Ozzie password entry screen is not a password-protected secure function. Like NT, there is no password required to invoke the password entry screen of Ozzie. Nor is the Ozzie screen invoked upon receiving a command to execute a secure function. Further, Ozzie never discloses invoking a security feature based on the validity of the entered password. Rather, Ozzie is concerned only with how to assure the user that he is interacting with a bona fide application program, and not a foreign agent. Thus, Ozzie modifies the “look” of the password entry screen. Ozzie fails to anticipate the amended claims under §102.

The Carter and TechNet articles also fail to anticipate the claimed invention. Specifically, the TechNet article discusses ways in which a user may secure an NT network. This includes changing passwords, shutting down unneeded application programs, and placing constraints on how users select their passwords. The Carter article is an NT Study Guide that details troubleshooting procedures and NT logon services. Neither reference discusses a password entry screen that is invoked responsive to a command to execute a password-protected secure function, and never mentions that the secure function may be executed based on the validity of the entered password. In fact, the only password entry screen these articles discuss is the NT password entry screen, which as stated above, does not anticipate the claimed invention.

Therefore, none of the references cited by the Examiner anticipate the amended claims under §102. As such, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

COATS & BENNETT, P.L.L.C.



Stephen A. Herrera
Registration No.: 47,642

P.O. Box 5
Raleigh, NC 27602
Telephone: (919) 854-1844

Dated: June 30, 2005